



**US Army Corps
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News Release

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Atchafalaya Basin gets more water today

Flow increased at request of La. governor to aid water quality

NEW ORLEANS – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers today increased the diversion of Mississippi River flows into the Atchafalaya Basin in response to Louisiana Gov. Mike Foster's request to improve water quality.

The increased flow was approved by Brig. Gen. Edwin J. Arnold, division engineer of the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division in Vicksburg, Miss.

Gov. Foster had written: "These water quality problems are creating a potential for large crawfish and fish kills that should be reduced if the water quality is improved."

Pockets of bad water, meaning low oxygen, have developed in the Atchafalaya Basin. The hope is that the added diversion, and a new crest coming downriver at virtually the same time, can help wash the low-oxygen water out of these pockets.

Gates at the Corps' Old River Control Structures, 80 river miles above Baton Rouge, were adjusted today to increase the "latitude flow" directed to the Atchafalaya River to 32 percent and decrease the Mississippi's share to 68 percent.

Latitude flow is the combined flow of the Mississippi and Red rivers at the latitude of Old River. By law, the flows must average 70 percent for the Mississippi and 30 percent for the Atchafalaya over a year's time.

The 32 percent flow will continue until May 23. At the end of these two weeks it is estimated that the Atchafalaya River stage would be 17.5 feet at Butte La Rose. It is estimated that the stage would be 17.1 feet if 30 percent had been maintained.

Butte La Rose is used as the benchmark stage, because it is an important point where water begins to spread out over the basin. This morning the stage at Butte La Rose was 14.4 feet, and the flow was increased around noon. A stage of 14.8 is expected Friday. Fortunately, the diversion will coincide with a rise on the Mississippi, and thus the Atchafalaya. The crest at Butte La Rose is expected to be 17.5 feet.